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THE FUNCTIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE  
IN THE NATIONAL LIFE.

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O R A T I O N ✓

BEFORE THE

LITERARY SOCIETIES OF IOWA COLLEGE,

GRINNELL, IOWA,

BY

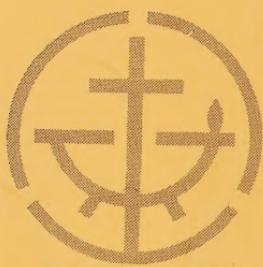
REV. DAVID O. MEARS, D. D.,

OF WORCESTER, MASS.

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AN

O R A T I O N

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

LITERARY SOCIETIES OF IOWA COLLEGE,

GRINNELL, IOWA,

ON

SATURDAY, JUNE 24, 1882,

BY

REV. DAVID O. MEARS, D. D.,  
*xis*

OF WORCESTER, MASS.

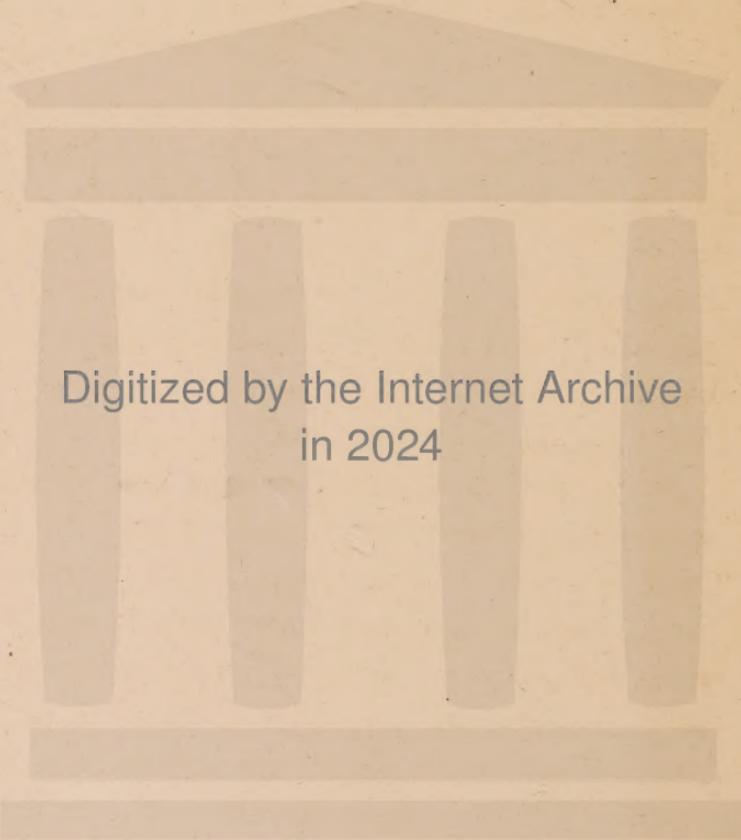
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# ORATION.

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*Mr. President and Gentlemen*

*of the College Societies :*

IN the individual as well as the corporate experience, gladness and sorrow meet at strange junctures. At such a juncture this assembly meets to-day.

Duty—small word but great also—never yields its place. The soldier's grief is no excuse for a furlough. There is here a grief that, like the tide upon the beach, has sobbed itself upon every heart. It is probable that never did college hold its commencement under such circumstances before.

There is somehow a reminder of the old General's dying request that they bury his body with his kindred, but carry his heart to Valmy and bury it where his comrades had fallen. The hearts of Grinnell's dead and wounded are with the College. For this institution, the town was built. Its spirit has deeded every acre to those who chose it with their homesteads as a heritage. To build its walls no sacrifice has been too great; to guard its interests has been their joy and honorable pride.

“Pardon me,” said Kossuth in one of his entranc-

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ing speeches, when his eloquent lips became silent in the hush of the throng, "Pardon me, the shades of my fathers pass before me." This day's occasion means not merely the living,—the plans and impulses of the departed are powerful here. Every hand of Grinnell's dead would be lifted to build again the walls of the College they loved, and love still. This day's gathering is not foreign to your city's grief.

When half the Pilgrims of Plymouth were laid to rest on the old hill that so long had guarded the harbor; when so few were left that there were none to follow the dead to their graves, so imperative was it that the remnant should care for the sick and the dying; not even then did the Pilgrim spirit fail or falter—and the Mayflower went home without a passenger.

The Pilgrim spirit is here. While debating last Tuesday as to the personal possibilities involved in my engagement to address you, there came this telegraphic despatch, "Come and speak. Church not destroyed. College will go on with buildings destroyed,"—a message signed by your friend and mine, founder of town and lover of College, whose voice has spared neither time nor strength in appeals for your sufferers.

Pardon me; I am not here to bestow compliments; but Iowa College means the spirit of Plymouth Rock.

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Puritan resolution founded old Harvard when there were sufferings enough in the colonies to excuse less noble men. Again, in 1764, the time of her greatest disaster, when Harvard Hall was burned to the foundations, turning to ashes its entire library, and sweeping away all the College apparatus, the Old Bay State, mother of yours, sprung to her feet to more than make good the great loss.

Words cannot describe the first half-century of Yale's existence, in its sufferings and sacrifices, making even the stout hearted Davenport say, in 1664, "In New Haven, Christ's cause is lost." We pass the time of heroic struggles in 1689, "when every eleventh man in the militia had fallen. Every eleventh family was burned out. All resources were exhausted, and every city and town was loaded with debt." We turn to 1704, when sentinels paced every town at night against the French and Indians; when not a mother hushed her child to rest, "but knew that before morning the tomahawk might crush its infant skull." It was a time when the circulating medium of Connecticut was scarcely £2,000, and yet in three years, the Colony paid out more than that for war *outside* its own territory. In such a period, Yale gained its greatest impetus in the willing hearts of the impoverished Colony's noble sons.

Am I wrong in saluting Iowa College, a child,

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both in spirit and deed, of Pilgrim and Puritan. Its early history will rank with that of Harvard and of Yale ; and as history repeats itself, I stand, in this time of your losses and your griefs, to say that in the remembrance of the dead, for every hand that built those now ruined walls there will be two to rebuild, and for every hard earned dollar of the fathers and mothers giving it foundation, the children of such parents will sacrifice two.

It sometimes takes sorrow to show us how very deep our love has been. This College has a stronger hold upon its constituency than it could have otherwise known in half a century. Marius, shorn of his power, sent word back to Rome as a confession of his weakness, saying, “Tell the prætor that you have seen Caius Marius, a fugitive, sitting on the ruins of Carthage.” No student nor alumnus folds his hands over the ruined walls of Iowa College. You send back no word to Yale and Harvard, “Go tell them in their power that you saw us helpless among the ruins of our Alma Mater ;” but with willing hearts and hands, the scholars of America will spring to the help of those who prove their nobility by helping themselves.

Understand me! I have been cut to my heart at the sight of this terrible furrow of cyclonic desolation ; I have sought to lighten no weight of the grief you must not forget ; but it is my hope, in

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discussing with you the theme I have prepared, to inspire a yet truer devotion to those vital interests represented in your City's College that yet lives in the hearts of thousands, though every wall of brick and masonry is a ruin.

*Mr. President and Gentlemen :*

My first duty, but for events before which the speaker is only a cipher, would have compelled an acknowledgment in appreciation of the honor you have conferred upon me, to address you upon this occasion. I have accepted your invitation on the ground that scholarship is not sectional. Iowa College shares the pride of the Commonwealth, and thus bears its honored name ; and yet you can no more limit its influence by the State's boundaries, than you can stay back these waters of your rivers in their onward flow from shimmering under the hottest tropical sun, or congealing in dreary solitudes undisturbed by human tread.

Scholarship is national, and knows no State's rights ; nay it is cosmopolitan ;—the world of letters is bounded neither by mountains, rivers nor seas. The world pays customs on paper and ink, but not on scholarship. Involved in your cordial invitation therefore, a comparative stranger to the soil has a species of divine right in Iowa College to-day.

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The wisest men have modestly written that the “commencement” of the scholar’s life occurs at the end of the College curriculum. The College thus means a power that shapes for some great end. What is that power? What is that end? What part does the literary society of the College bear to the stirring events of the day?

The theme, to which your attention is invited for the hour, is suggested by the fact that, to a large extent, your future gains impetus and shape from the College. Great problems have overleaped these now broken walls. The fife and drum make music on the campus when armies of the nations meet. Every living question challenges the Students’ debate. It is impossible to ponder the thoughts that Plato wrote, and at the same time wholly forget the foremost living nations of which Plato has been the intellectual power for more than two thousand years. In this respect the College is not a hermitage.

The herald of the revolution greeting the 19th of April, ’75, over the fields baptized with blood, “O, what a glorious morning this!” was the same Samuel Adams whose commencement thesis at Harvard, thirty-five years before, had contained the fundamental doctrines of American liberty. We recall the eventful year 1774, when the keenest thinkers of the colonies were making their power

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felt. Side by side stood Livingston, of New Jersey, and John Jay, of New York; but with these was Hamilton, eighteen years of age, the young sophomore of King's College, who, dividing equal honors with such master minds, received the title, "Vindicator of the Congress."

Not every man is an Adams or a Hamilton any more than every event is a revolution; yet in such conspicuous examples is seen the connection of college life, and that of humanity. England's "Iron Duke," crowned with the nation's honors, broke his soldier-like silence in Eton College by the measured words, "It is here that Waterloo was won." The biographer of Choate tells us, that after the settlement of the celebrated Dartmouth College case in Mr. Webster's care, the nervous student of the junior year not only soon chose Webster's profession for his own; but on that night "the victory of Miltiades would not suffer him to sleep."

Just as the status of the college is largely dependant upon its alumni, even so their deeds and opinions toughening the national fibre, reflexively inspire the zeal of student life. Judged by his opportunities and possibilities the words of De Quincey, robbed of their special reference, may be predicated of the true student, "He's booked for a ride down all history whether you and I like it or not." Our

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theme is—*The Functions of the Christian College in the National Life.*

Every College, using the term in its popular sense, which is at the same time accurate, in the unity of its purpose sustains a twofold relation as regards its value.

I. The College and the Individual. Your presence gives assumption in the proof of a fact we need not discuss,—that the highest welfare of man is subserved by such a course of study. Intellectual culture never degrades; and yet not all such culture is found within classic walls. Multitudes are self-taught, but to be “self-taught” does not mean to be “untaught.” Instruction is by no means a synonym for knowledge. The most faithful teachers cannot give knowledge to the student; knowledge comes from within, never from without. In this respect every man is self-made if made at all. Even dunces occasionally sit on college steps;—at least, until advised to go home. What we know is ours; and what others tell us we may possibly remember,—but what we merely remember is not knowledge. Many a man can repeat the text-books of his studies from preface to conclusion, and even then be ignorant of what he has repeated. The College does not impart knowledge, but is an occasion for its acquisition through the instruction

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given, and the hidden powers developed in the student.

It is but fair to remember that Franklin,—who afterwards became in the language of his eulogist, “the ornament of America, and the pride of modern philosophy,”—had completed his school-life at the age of ten years. Scholarship would be false to itself should it forget Nathaniel Bowditch, a man almost without a peer among the scholars of the Globe; and yet even he, at ten years of age, had graduated from school-life; and while others of lesser note were at Harvard, his place of learning was the rolling ship, and his desk, for his pencil and slate, once at least, a keg of powder under the opening fire of a French privateer.

It is said that when on the floor of Congress, the sarcastic Randolph, of Roanoke, taunted Henry Clay because he could not read Latin, the only response of the great commoner was given in the manly tears of his regret; but it must also be recorded, while Randolph had had for his College-mates the students of Columbia, the witnesses of Clay’s earliest efforts were the cattle in the barn winking their approbation, and without any applause, lazily chewing their cuds, even during the oratorical climaxes.

No diploma, either of school or college, fell into the hands of Sir Humphrey Davy, who passed from

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his poverty in Penzance to the the highest office in the gift of English scholars, the presidency of the Royal Society. “Self-taught” never means “untutored,” but has reference solely to the methods employed. While a few are competent to mark out their own studies and by their own powers to pursue them, it yet remains true that these very choices and powers need educating or drawing out.

There is no fixed limit of knowledge marked by these classic walls. The Student is not crammed with thoughts of other men ; but must become a thinker himself. The College writes no books, at least beyond an annual artless catalogue, but it does educate writers of books. It never produces art, but does graduate artists. It is not a field for professional study ; but develops abilities that shall make its students better prepared to enter the professions. It fashions no beautiful Apollo out of the quarry of human thought, but sharpens the chisels by which, in other hands the marble shall be shaped. “Education,” says Stuart Mill, “makes man a more intelligent shoemaker if that be his occupation, but not by teaching him how to make shoes.” Tübingen’s University made Kepler able to read in the sky the celebrated law for whose discovery God had waited for him six thousand years. Trinity College developed Newton’s power to expound the greatest of all discoveries ever made,—

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a law dropping a worm-eaten apple from its stem earthward, and at the same time binding by invisible cords the countless systems of the sky to the farthest central sun.

What man most needs, the College, true to its calling, supplies. Its greeting is in the name of the world's best thought ; it lifts to a higher plane ; its purpose is truth, and the truth makes men free. In this respect the College stands alone, the exponent of the broadest and highest culture. The American mother, with deeper affection than Sparta knew, and heroism as great, rocks the child's cradle. The Nation is concerned with what her baby's brain shall think, his hand shall do, his heart shall choose ; and is not less concerned when the College, assisting in his culture, becomes his *Alma Mater*. The functions of the College need no eulogistic words, when we consider her work and remember in the words of Humboldt, "The finest fruit earth holds up to its Maker is a man."

II. The College and the Nation! Man is not educated for his own sake alone. The nation can never be wiser than its wisest citizens. I am well aware how aptly Fisher Ames wrote nearly a century ago, "It is by no means certain that a nation composed wholly of scholars and philosophers would contain less presumption, political ignorance, levity and extravagance than another State peopled by

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tradesmen, farmers and men of business, without a metaphysician or speculatist among them." The Republic can never thrive under class rule ; but this the College cannot perpetuate. Every teacher is necessarily a specialist. The great thinkers are profound in limited avenues of thought. Said the quaint Father Taylor in his inimitable way, "Waldo Emerson is a good philosopher, but a very poor theologian." Professor Tyndall has a right to speak on science, but he is hardly as good authority on the Christian evidences. Sir William Hamilton with all his acumen might have made sad havoc with the principles of astronomy. So, many a scholar in the languages can neither explain nor test the political economy of Adam Smith. No one of these could reach beyond his own province ; hence the value of the College in the old Roman sense, "a body of colleagues, associated together by the possession of common functions."

The founding of the first New England College in 1638, was the demand of a people ready for heroic self-sacrifices ; and their history has been repeated ever since in every College of the newer settlements, —I mean the College, not the University. Without these colleges the nation is not safe. Religion so-called, without learning degenerates into gross superstition. You cannot educate the heart without the head,—and no more the head without the heart.

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The immense activities of commercial life, the evolution of progress, the shifting turns of politics, the purity of statesmanship,—all these are outgrowths of principles, in search of whose roots the true student finds the longest days all too short. The College is only a centre, in which these complex principles are rigidly taught ; and the institution that is true to itself will respect every new utterance from whatever source it springs, equally with the old, and give it due weight.

We thus observe the agreement of both theory and history, that the College is a unique and distinct factor in civilization ; it is the means of giving man the highest culture, and at the same time is the chief means of national strength. It makes and keeps the grade of scholarship, at which the preparatory schools must aim ; and these must make their standards approximate to its own.

Most of our professional schools, if not all, receive as students many who have never pursued a collegiate course. This fact alone hints that the intellectual training of such schools is no advance in general knowledge. The President of Harvard, a few years since, raised the question whether the medical profession, as a body, can hold the title of “learned,” since so large a proportion of its students are simply graduates from our lower schools. The best training in our departments of Law and Theo-

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logy can in no measure compensate for the loss of that power that only the most rigid intellectual discipline can procure. The college alone marks the average standard of intellectual attainments.'

Far from us the suggestion that wisdom necessarily belongs to culture. Education develops the powers by which man can better do his work. The intuitions are not thereby sharpened or blunted. Few men, if any, in our generation have equalled the late Senator Wilson, of Massachusetts, in forecasting future events. Political economists were not his teachers, nor did he abide the wisdom of Statesmen. Propounding to the plainest men of plainest speech his questions, he read in their answers the wisdom or the unwisdom of political theories and through them predicted success or failure.

John Adams, the worthy successor of Washington in the presidential chair, recalls in one of his letters, an evening in September, 1774, spent in the tavern at Shrewsbury in the Old Bay State. Five farmers were speaking together of the exciting events taking place in Boston. Said the fourth man, after the expressions of three others, "If parliament can take away Mr. Hancock's wharf and Mr. Rowe's wharf, they can take away your barn and my house." The fifth man in the group, silent and thoughtful hitherto, now spoke to his companion-tillers of the soil, in language unclassic but

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forceful : “It is high time for us to rebel; we must rebel some time or other; and we had better rebel now than at any time to come.”

It was thirty-three years after that stormy evening’s conversation when Mr. Adams wrote, “I was disgusted with his word ‘*rebel*.’ I mention this anecdote to show that the idea of independence was familiar even among the common people much earlier than some persons pretend.” In such a conversation of men of otherwise narrow views and very little reflection, the seeds of truth and liberty took root in the stranger as he listened; and made him by a new motive the consummate orator of the Revolution, leading the yeomanry, his teachers, to independence.

The average individual is only the Nation in miniature. The microscope has brought to human vision a plant floating in a drop of water whose branches and foliage are the shelter of countless fishes, to whom that drop of water is an immense ocean ;—in *our* ocean, which, compared with immensity is after all but a drop, though its farthest shores seem infinite, beneath the crests our steamships cut and navies ride, that same species of plant is floating. Three hundred feet deep and with an area of two square miles, leviathans and fishes make its branches and foliage their home and defence. At once, the largest species of plant known to the botanist, it is at the

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same time the smallest, but as wonderful and perfect in the drop that clings to your finger's tip as in the heaving Ocean,—that other drop in God's palm.

The National life does not denote the deeds of a multitude, but taken in its generic sense, the Nation is an immense man even as its germs are perfected at first in the individual. The greatness of the one is either prefigured or expressed in the other. Athens was not itself without Anaxagoras; and philosophy, as well as grim humor, breathed in the exile's reply, when having been pitied because deprived of Athens, he answered, "Rather Athens of me."

Every revolution calls a Cromwell, else it remains only rebellion; every struggle for national freedom demands a Washington, or it will fail; every constitution must have its expounder, or the sun will set upon nothing but fragments. Rome's splendid highway, built for the Cæsars, ran between the urns of her honored dead. English history and progress have been marked on the marbles of Westminster Abbey,—so profoundly are the individual and the national life connected. "The whole earth," said Pericles, "is the monument of illustrious men."

Holding closely to the subtle relations of the college, as regards the culture both of the individual and the nation, we now turn to consider the national demands under which the college is laid.

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Firstly; The Philosophical and Classical Demand. I have used these terms to express the older idea of the College curriculum. Shall the active students of the present century give less attention to the past? has been a much mooted question. Can the Nation safely lessen its hold on the history and the literature sprung from the banks of the Tiber and the coast of the *Æ*gean? Can Milton and Shakespeare displace Virgil and Homer? These and questions similar have been raised for various reasons, but we shall view them briefly in their relations to national history.

No nation can safely tolerate ignorance of the history of other nations. A people who think are concerned with what other peoples have thought. It would be keenest sarcasm for modern interpreters to slight the name and the substantial origin of the civil law as Rome understood it. Modern politicians and statesmen are not yet graduated from the tutoryship of Aristotle who first made politics a science. The Greek philosophy was in some respects a failure, but it has produced great results in the new principle it gave the world, of exalting the individual human conduct.

The value of human thought is not so much in its conclusions as in its endeavors. Modern Psychologists who have not even yet proved their science *exact*, cannot disregard the earliest attempts of the

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Academy. The Nation can no more ignore the past than can Jurists the old English law.

Now, if it be agreed that modern governments are strongly bound to the old, and to a large extent have been shaped by them, they surely must not forget the teachers. In a double sense therefore the Nation lays claim upon the College to develop the instructions of the past.

Thus consider the study of its languages. Whatever the dialect, words are always human, though the thought is divine. The sacred penman has told us that neither beasts nor birds, nor cattle had a name, until Adam gave the name. Man was made not with language ready for him but with the power of making his own language. All language is simply the human expression of thought. Words are coined to declare ideas. Gravitation, for example, is a fact as old as the Universe, yet the word dates back only to Newton. Our modern word "telephone" is of pure Greek derivation, yet, as a matter of course, was not coined until after the discovery of the wonderful instrument. Language is the library of the world's thought. "Words are things," said Mirabeau in his passionate invective, and he was right. Our mints are stamping for commerce the shining coins of copper and silver and gold; so in like manner thought in its enlargement and progress mints out for us its words. "Words without thoughts," says Max Müller, "are

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dead sounds; thoughts without words are nothing. To think is to speak low; to speak is to think aloud. The word is the thought incarnate."

Thus intimately are the word and its thought allied, and especially in the Latin and the Greek. No translation can preserve the thought intact. All the renderings of Homer, together with all the wealth of beauty in our own language, can never equal the words he chose for his own ideal conceptions three thousand years ago. The conviction of Stuart Mill is true, "we must be able in a certain degree to think in Greek, if we would represent to ourselves how a Greek thought."

That idea of utility that decries the study of languages men do not now speak, like a shallow brook is better for noise than for use. One word in our every twenty is derived from the language of Attica; and one in our every three has sprung from the vocabulary of the Roman Forum. The languages dead? They are chiseled, finished vases, more costly than gold, fragrant with the thoughts of immortal men. You cannot change the vase without imperiling the thought. Even Dryden's attempt to put "Paradise Lost" into rhyme, and in Milton's own language, was a disastrous failure.

We can almost feel the sweep of Cicero's toga in his masterly orations. The splendor of Cæsar's power is blazoned upon the dignified annals of

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Tacitus. We seem to breathe the air of Mantua's marshes, to hear the lowing of cattle and the bleating of sheep in Virgil's magic verse. The satirical invectives of Juvenal against Rome's tyranny and crimes, come from a higher sphere than Olympus. In the logical steps of Thucydides, seems the tramp of Athenian hosts; and the glitter of their armor shines in the words of his yet unrivaled pen. The shadow of the avenging Nemesis can never be translated from the pages of Herodotus. Weightier than pillars of bronze against the impending downfall of Athens are the simple and majestic words of the Philippiques and the *Oration on the Crown*.

Next to the writer's presence are his works; hence the value to the national existence of the conflicts and the peace, the rise and the fall of nations that have lived and died. Said the brilliant Choate, "I seek political lessons for my country. But I am to traverse centuries before I find these lessons in the pages of Thucydides . . . . I dismiss therefore and replace in my library all my books, except the two or three which I read for English and Latin,— and bestow myself on this."

The modern languages sprung from the old, and drawing their vitality from them, can never take their place. It would be only the killing of the goose on which men have depended for the golden eggs.

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Parallel with the study of the languages of the past is the study of history. We take the term in its broadest sense, covering the motives and deeds of nations and men,—philosophy teaching by example. “History,” says Lieber, “is the memory of nations;”—just as a word is the memory of an idea, yet is it true that as many a ship with its living freight has foundered in mid-ocean,—over whose grave the waters in an hour have become glassy and smooth—as if no ship had ever there gone down—so nations have sunk from remembrance. “There is no history where there is no liberty;” no nation can therefore neglect the lessons that are chiseled as if for eternity upon the marbles of time. While noting the golden reign of Elizabeth we must not forget Lord Bacon. The brilliant deeds of Charlemagne were but the thoughts of his adviser Alcuin acted out. The men of letters made the “golden age” of which the great Emperor was the patron.

It has been said that there is often more history in a word than in a military campaign; be that as it may, the sciences of philology, psychology and history must be read together and thoroughly; and this the welfare of the nation requires of the American College as the chief source of the highest learning. Our governors may not write Latin and Greek and converse in Hebrew, as did Bradford of

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Plymouth; our pastors may not correspond with each other in Latin and Hebrew, as did John Norton and John Cotton and President Chauncey; but the newest nation must know the half-hidden secrets of the life and death of the oldest for its own advantage.

If the voices of the past should now be made to keep silence; the marbles quarried from Pentelicus and shaped by Phidias in the Parthenon,—marbles still preserved,—the blocks of purest white that quivered under the chisel and hammer of Praxiteles,—the well-laid pavements of the Acropolis would seem instinct with life;—if the old thinkers should be made to hold their peace, the very stones of history would cry out.

Secondly; The Scientific Demand. No greater strain has ever been put upon guardians of the higher education than during the last twenty-five years. The marvellous discoveries of science, the necessary modification of old theories and the demands of an extremely practical age, have all laid claims upon their attention. Mutual jealousies between the extreme advocates of the old and the new theories have too often been felt,—jealousies now happily passing away.

Whatever may be the relative importance of the two, one fact is clear;—the dependence of national progress upon scientific research demands a careful

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attention to those principles, even to the latest discoveries. The wildest guesses of half a century ago did not equal what are now seen to be facts.

The important question as to the power of scientific studies in developing the intellect we shall merely touch upon by a reference to the conclusions of the scientific and classical faculties of the German University of Berlin. After a ten years' experiment between the classical and non-classical studies, it is the unanimous declaration of the faculty that even in advanced mathematics the students who have received a classical training though slower at the beginning, soon show a clearer insight into the deepest mathematical relations, and in the end decidedly surpass the non-classical students. The professor of astronomy says, "The students prepared at the real-schools (the non-classical) show at first more knowledge and more skill than those prepared at the gymnasia, but their future development is slower, more superficial and less independent, while they show still greater inferiority in point of ability to carry on the more difficult processes of independent research." The professor of chemistry takes the same ground.

The experiment so far as carried makes clear the fact that no merely Scientific Schools, no Institutes of Technology however useful in their place, can usurp the functions of the College, that equally

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honors the classic and the scientific courses of study.

What then does the national life demand? It does not demand mere discoveries and inventions, but rather instruction in those principles which shall lead to these. The inventor of the steam engine was not a college graduate nor even student; yet as instrument-maker to Dr. Black and Professor Anderson of the University of Glasgow, he gained a knowledge of the principles that led to the great invention. Principles are always greater than their application. The laws of political science are broader than those even of Adam Smith, to whom we owe so much of our national life and prosperity; and a discipleship as to Free Trade or Protection is not insisted upon in a science more comprehensive than either extreme. The true college deals with principles rather than their application.

The methods of George III. of England are out of date. You recall how both king and subjects were firm believers in the value of lightning conductors; the great question was, should the points of those conductors be sharp or blunt,—following either Franklin or Wilson. In response to the king's private request to support Wilson's views, Sir John Pringle gave answer; "But Sire, I cannot reverse the laws and operations of nature." "Then Sir John," said the king, "You had perhaps better resign."

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The indebtedness of the nation to scientific research, emphasizes the reflex national demand for the profoundest inquiries into those principles. The fruits of Farraday's discovery are the gleaming lights on every coast,—those guide-posts of danger. Commerce owes its progress largely to what men have discovered of the laws of heat,—the inventions are only applications of these laws. Chemists in the interests of manufactures command salaries, hardly exceeded by that of the presidency of the Republic. From the day of Thales of Miletus (600 B. C.) the scholars of the Centuries have made for us the telegraph and telephone possible,—precursors of greater results yet to come. Science has brought light and safety in our mines of metal and of coal. Careful science has laid her hand upon the sufferer in the hospital, and under grating of saw and cut of knife and quiver of needle has frozen agony itself into the calmness of sleep.

Roots and equations bring weariness to the student's brain but it has taken the subtlest findings of the highest mathematics to construct the turbine wheel, unweariedly groaning in its flume. Sir William Herschel long ago discovered that before he could follow the reasonings of a work on Musical harmony (the profession out of which he graduated as an astronomer), he must become a mathematician;

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since music is simply harmonious motion. We need not decry the enthusiasm of the ancient sage who called God a Geometer, when we remember that the differential Calculus had its origin in the belief that it might assist in proving the immortality of the soul. On the assumption that the principles of mathematics are the same here as in the farthest constellation Laplace demonstrated that the perturbations affecting the planetary orbits are only “immense pendulums of eternity which beat centuries as ours beat seconds.”

Two famous national blunders will emphasize the relations of science to national peace, in that star-gazing science,—astronomy. The one cost our government ten million dollars to settle the boundary between ourselves and Mexico,—astronomers correcting the blunder by marking the real boundary by the parallax of the stars. The other and yet more famous occasion was well known as the “battle of the maps” touching our northern boundaries with the British possessions. National limits need something more enduring than rivers that change their courses, and trees twisted by storms or killed by time. Hardly had our proud government built its fortress at Rouse’s Point, so close to English soil as to sweep it in time of war, when the boundaries were disputed. By careful astronomical calculation it was found that our fortress was built on British

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soil. The fault was not in our stars but in ourselves. To remedy the blunder that a scientific survey would never have made, cost us the deep agitations which it took a Webster to master in his famous treaty with Lord Ashburton,—a treaty happily that saved us from another war.

Our very time-pieces are set and corrected by the heavenly bodies. Wealth and ruin, life and death, jostle the scales of commerce, while the sailor captain, with a portable instrument in his hand measures a little space in the sky. There, on the plunging ship, alone in the darkness, the distance between star and star declares, within a mile's space at midnight in mid-ocean, just where his ship of heavy cargo is making her way.

While thus speaking, I am well aware of the slender agencies on which science depends, both for its derivation and its execution.

Science planned in vain to bridge the Thames, until Sir Samuel Brown caught the secret in the architecture of the spider's net, and the iron web was spun above the tide.

It took the cunning ship-worm to become the teacher of Sir Isambert Brunel in his great work of tunneling the London river.

The coloring of the butterfly's wing hinted to Stothard his rare knowledge of mixing colors for

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the canvas; and the close observer of a wasp's nest became the inventor of paper.

Science points in triumph to her prowess in the siege of Paris by the Germans in 1867. Bismarck's hosts made sport of the proud city shut off from all the world. Every railroad track was torn up. Every telegraph wire was cut. Every highway was blockaded. The great city in silence was supposed to be ignorant of the wishes of friend and foe. At such a time science photographed upon the finest of paper a few inches square the news-pages of the daily *London Times*. Tied under the wings of carrier-pigeons these tissue sheets were brought to the besieged city. It was then but the work of minutes to transfer upon glass slides the microscopic letters as transparencies to be flung upon a screen which men could read.

Science a marvel ? All true; and yet dependent upon the eternal laws of God ! No more marvellous than the courage and instinct of that carrier-dove cutting her way so high that the shadows of her swift wings did not darken the angry waves of the English channel so far below; so swift, so high above the German hosts, that a rifle would be too slow of aim, even if the silken wings had not been hidden among the clouds of the sky,—a divine messenger through science making the prophecy of the wise preacher true; “a bird of the air shall

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carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter."

In a twofold way therefore the nation gains wisdom ; when through all history wrapped in the languages and philosophy it learns what men have thought and when in science it leans hard upon God's bosom. God speaks in science like a beam of light; and again as truly speaks in human history,—the one voice sacred like the other.

Fix your gaze to-night on the bright cluster in the constellation Hercules, distant, as the light flies in its wildering speed, some two thousand years. When the blazing beams of splendor were flashed thence, Cato was ruining the once proud Carthage; Athens in her beauty yet unsullied was teaching her conquerors; and Rome was soon to bear the rule of the Gracchi. Not yet had Cæsar and Pompey, Marius and Sulla, added glory to the annals of men; nor had Virgil and Horace, Cicero and Ovid written their immortal words. Not yet had the star shone over Bethlehem. During the time of its leaping speed hither, nations have risen and died; and cities have crumbled into decay. Crusades and wars have had their slow history. The twenty long centuries' blazing flight hither is but a few hours from its end. Two thousand years old that beam of light shall be when it shall daze your vision to-night; but not too old for science with the spectroscope to analyze

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after its long journey hither, any more than is the human history of two thousand years' parallel duration too antiquated for modern thought.

#### Thirdly : The Moral Demand.

In one respect all schools of thought agree,—the national character is concerned with that of the individual,—the great question touches the ultimate end of the morality. Even materialism makes haste through Herbert Spencer to give us its *Data of Ethics*, and the Nation is no careless looker-on. In proportion as intellectual culture increases the power for good, even so that same culture wrongly directed is a means of evil. Mental accomplishments are no substitute for the moral choice. Some of the most brilliant scholars of West Point have become rebels. The Aaron Burrs have prostituted their splendid powers, and become mere wrecks. The Catilines have usually been “far the foremost in force of body and of mind.” Men are measured not chiefly for what they *can* do, but for what they *will* do. Logically speaking, the power that has given shape to the highest civilization must hold itsregnancy, at least until another shall take its place. Since the Christian nations are at the same time the highest in civilization, it would be the height of absurdity to ascribe such progress to anti-christian theories, which certainly have fullest sway elsewhere, but without avail. As a matter of history,

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Christianity has been the central intellectual agency of the world, by its originality and by its immense power in the transformation and assimilation of old faiths. It has opened the springs of a boundless charity, growing deeper with the centuries. It gave to the world the first public hospital, and that by woman's hand. It was the first to declare the sanctity of human life, against the traditional customs of men. It broke by slow degrees the chains of Roman slavery. It has transformed whole races of once savage men into gentlemen. It has lifted higher and higher the ægis of civil liberty and human equality, until woman, despised elsewhere and down-trodden, holds even in classic halls, her sacred place by man's side. The great events, of which these are but a part, have served (using the language of Mr. Lecky) to "constitute together a movement of philanthropy which has never been paralleled or approached in the Pagan world."

On grounds such as these, the nation demands a *Christian* College. I do not mean an institution christened a child of the Vatican on the Tiber's banks ; nor do we need for any such the seal of England's great church ; education must not be cramped with even Wesley's devout name ; and must look far beyond the austere thinker of Geneva. Scholarship to be Christian need not carry a crucifix nor wear a surplice. It will not sneer at Darwin,

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nor fail to ponder well its heaviest antagonist's deepest thoughts.

Infidelity has never laid the corner-stone of a college. Old Harvard's motto has not been superseded,—*for Christ and the Church*. Sceptical thinkers have sat at Christian desks, trying to file away the truth,—but all in vain. Christian scholarship knows no bigoted narrow limits within the infinite radii of God's truth. In fact, all colleges on their literary side are protests against atheism. The reformation of religion and the revival of learning go hand in hand; and so connected are they, that the decay of faith in the Christian ethics has always been followed by the softening of the Nation's brain.

Not yet can we accept the idea that our knowledge of right and wrong is derived from our sense of pleasure and pain. Not yet can we deduct the inference that as self happiness is promoted by furthering the happiness of others, even so universal happiness is furthered by our supreme devotion to self. *If* the end of morality is pleasure that does not interrupt the pleasures of others, then the miser becomes virtuous. *If* self-happiness is a virtue when it does not interfere with the pleasure of others in any conscious loss on their part, then the Missouri ruffians are saints, except as they shall terrify the amply rich whom they rob. The nation

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has nothing to do with a system of morals with conscience left out. Better far than this the philosophy of Plato, “Not to live, but to live nobly is the object.”

*Gentlemen:* I have submitted these few suggestions, bearing upon an important theme, to your patient attention. The College is great; but its materials are men; likewise the nation’s greatness is in its men.

Plutarch records the promise of Stasierates to carve Mount Athos, in Thrace, into the shape and lineaments of a man,—to remain an enduring Statue of Alexander the Great. The left hand should hold a city of ten thousand inhabitants, and out from the palm of the right hand should ever flow a river into the sea. Not so speaks the Republic; every man is a sovereign, though not a monarch. Mountains bear the Nation’s honored names, but ours is a State without a king.

History describes the nervousness of Frederick the Great, whose central palace window at Potsdam, was open towards the windmill of a peasant. Stung to the quick by the refusal of the miller to sell his property, the sovereign threatened force. One word of the peasant’s reply was enough; “There is a Supreme Court in Berlin;” and the mill remained and remains to-day,—the peasant a Sovereign with

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the Emperor. Why is every man's house his castle ? asked Chatham. "Because it is surrounded by a moat, or defended by a wall ? No, it may be a straw-built hut ; the wind may whistle around it ; the rain may enter it, but the king cannot."

" All that hath been majestical  
In life or death, since time began,  
Is native in the simple heart of all,  
The angel-heart of man."

School of Theology  
at Claremont









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